



COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES FOR WOMEN

Governor Schwarzenegger has called for a special session of the Legislature to address the urgent issues of recidivism and overcrowding in California's prison system. The Governor is introducing four correctional proposals: moving non-violent female offenders to secure community-based correctional facilities; creating secure parole re-entry facilities; building two new prisons and improving prison infrastructure; and streamlining the state's procurement process for these projects. If passed by the Legislature, these proposals will help reduce prison overcrowding and return-to-custody rates.

Protecting the Public by Reducing Recidivism

The number of female inmates has jumped 43.6 percent over the past 15 years, posing special challenges to California's prison system. Approximately 70 percent of women are currently serving prison terms for non-serious, non-violent offenses. An estimated 25,000 children have mothers in prison, straining our social services system. Placing female inmates in facilities designed to their needs can lower recidivism—thus protecting the public from further victimization and decreasing the prison population. These programs can also enhance family reunification, increase drug and alcohol abuse recovery, and increase parole success.

Governor Schwarzenegger including funding for this proposal in his proposed 2006-2007 budget. The special session provides the Legislature with a second opportunity to act on this program.

Under the Governor's proposal:

- CDCR will move 4,500 non-serious, non-violent female prisoners—approximately 40 percent of incarcerated women—from state prisons into community correctional rehabilitation facilities just prior to their release.
- These women will be placed in facilities near to where their children and families live.
- The facilities will be staffed by CDCR personnel who will provide 24-hour peace officer coverage.
- Community correctional rehabilitation facilities include programs and services in areas including substance abuse education and treatment, physical and mental health care, education and vocational training, life skills, cultural competency, and parenting and family reunification.

Research supports the effectiveness of community-based female offender programs.

- California's overall recidivism rate for female felons within two years of parole is 39 percent. A CDCR study of the Family Foundations (FFP) and Community Prisoner Mother Program (CPMP)—which serves mothers and their young children—found that both programs reported low recidivism rates; the one-year follow-up showed a recidivism rate of 14 percent for the FFP and 22 percent for the CPMP.

Male inmates will be housed in the 4,500 hundred beds made available by this proposal, helping to mitigate the crisis-level overcrowding in men's facilities.